

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 MC-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02

EB-08 XMB-02 /069 W

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R 041024Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8880

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USDAO KINSHASA

LIMITED OFFICIAL LIBREVILLE 0310

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MASS MILI GB

SUBJECT: USE OF FY 1977 FMS FINANCING FOR GABON

REF: STATE 023758

1. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, GABON IS LARGELY DEPENDENT FOR NINE MONTHS EACH YEAR ON AIRCRAFT TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN CAPITAL AND INTERIOR OF COUNTRY AND IS DEPENDENT ON AIRCRAFT ALL YEAR ROUND FOR RAPID TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN COUNTRYS TWO LARGEST CITIES, LIBREVILLE AND PORT GENTIL. BOTH GOG AND RIVATE FIRMS MAKE EXTENSIVE USE OF CARGO AIRCRAFT TO MOVE PERSONNEL AND SUPPLIES TO INTERIOR, WITH GOVERNMENT CARGO CARRIED PRINCIPALLY BY TWO L-100S AND COLLECTION OF SMALLER AND OLDER AIRCRAFT CURRENTLY IN GABONESE AIR FORCE INVENTORY.

2. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT C-130 WOULD SUPPLEMENT EXISTING L-100S IN TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT FOR GOG PROJECTS IN INTERIOR OF COUNTRY, REPLACING IN THIS ROLE OLDER AIRCRAFT CURRENTLY BEING USED FOR THIS PURPOSE. IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, C-130 WOULD
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ENHANCE MILITARY AIRLIFT CAPABILITY OF GAF, ENABLING IT TO PROVIDE PROMPT TRANSPORTATION FOR ANY OF ARMED SERVICES NEEDING TO MOVE REINFORCEMENTS RAPIDLY TO POINT AONG BORDER. FINALLY, C-130 WOULD PRESUMABLY BE USED FOR PARACHUGE OPERATIONS FOR WHICH CIVILIAN MODEL L-100 LESS SUITED.

3. USE OF C-130 FOR PURPOSES OUTLINED ABOVE WOULD APPEAR ENTIRLY CONSONANT WITH TOP GOG PRIORITIES IN BOTH DEFENSE AND DEVELOPMENT FIELDS. PRINCIPAL DEFENSE CONCERN IS WITH POSSIBLE HOSTILE ACTION BY NEIGHBORS, SO THAT ABILITY TO DESPATCH REINFORCEMENTS TO BORDER AREAS RESPONDS DIRECTLY TO PERCEIVED THREAT. FACT THAT PLANE CAN BE USED TO FURTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES WHEN NOT NEEDED FOR STRICTLY MEILITARY PURPOSES ENHANCES ITS VALUE TO GOG AND WILL PERMIIT IT CONTRUTE TO ECONOMIC GROWTH WHICH IS KEY ELEMENT IS ASSURING CONTINUED POLITICA STABILITY.

4. FOR REASONS CITED ABOVE, EMBASSY BELIEVES PURDHASE OF C-130 WOULD BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE USE FOR FMS FUNDS IN THIS DEVELOPING COUNTRY AND THUS URGES PROMPT APPROVAL OF GABONESE REQUEST TO APPLY \$2 MILLION IN FY 1977 CREDITS AS DOWNPAYMENT ON C-130. STEIGMAN

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Message Attributes

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